THE GRAVE.

A

POEM.

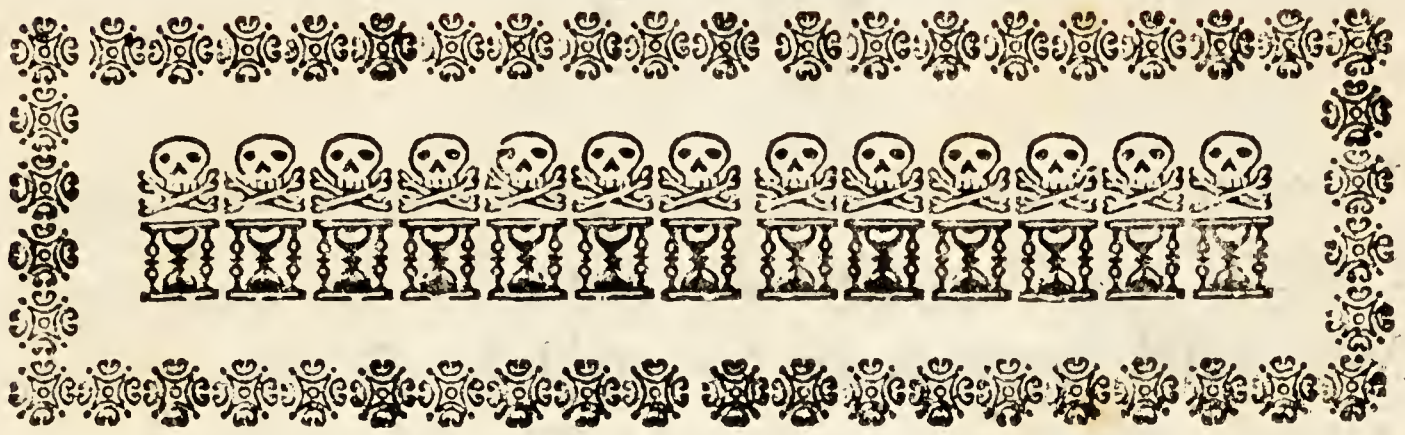
By ROBERT BLAIR.

The Houſe appointed for all Living. JOB.

The FOURTH EDITION.

LONDON, Printed:

NEW-YORK, Re-printed, and Sold by HUGH GAINE, at the Printing-Office oppoſite the *Old-Slip Market*, M,DCC,LIII.



THE GRAVE. A POEM.

WHILST ſome affect the Sun, and ſome the Shade,
Some flee the City, ſome the Hermitage;
Their Aims as various, as the Roads they take
In Journeying thro' Life; the Taſk be mine
To paint the gloomy Horrors of the *Tomb*;
Th' appointed Place of Rendezvous, where all
Theſe Travellers meet. Thy Succours I implore,
Eternal King! whoſe potent Arm ſuſtains
The Keys of Hell and Death. THE GRAVE dread Thing!
Men ſhiver, when thou'rt named: Nature appall'd
Shakes off her wanted Firmneſs. Ah! how dark
Thy long-extended Realms, and rueful Waſtes!

Where

Where nought but Silence reigns, and Night, dark Night,
Dark as was *Chaos*, 'ere the Infant Sun
Was roll'd together, or had try'd his Beams
Athwart the Gloom profound! The ſickly Taper
By glimmering thro' thy low-brow'd miſty Vaults,
(Furr'd round with mouldy Damps, and ropy Slime,)
Lets fall a ſupernumerary Horror,
And only ſerves to make thy Night more irkſome.
Well do I know thee by thy truſty *Yew*,
Chearleſs, unſocial Plant! that loves to dwell
'Midſt Sculls and Coffins, Epitaphs and Worms:
Where light-heel'd Ghoſts, and viſionary Shades,
Beneath the wan cold Moon (as Fame reports)
Embody'd thick, perform their myſtick Rounds.
No other Merriment, Dull Tree! is thine.

See yonder hallow'd Fane! the pious Work
Of Names once fam'd, now dubious or forgot,
And buried 'midſt the Wreck of Things which were:
There lie interr'd the more illuſtrious Dead.
The Wind is up: Hark! how it howls! Methinks
Till now, I never heard a ſound ſo dreary:
Doors creak, and Windows clap, and Night's foul Bird
Rook'd in the Spire ſcreams loud: The gloomy Iſles
Black-plaſter'd, and hung round with Shreds of 'Scutcheons

And

And tatter'd Coats of Arms, ſend back the Sound
Laden with heavier Airs, from the low Vaults
The Manſions of the Dead. Rouſed from their Slumbers
In grim Array the grizly Spectres riſe,
Grin horrible, and obſtinately ſullen
Paſs and repaſs, huſh'd as the Foot of Night.
Again! the Screech-Owl ſhrieks: Ungracious Sound!
I'll hear no more, it makes one's Blood run chill.

Quite round the Pile, a Row of Reverend Elms,
Coæval near with that, all ragged ſhew,
Long laſh'd by the rude Winds: Some rift half down
Their branchleſs Trunks: Others ſo thin a Top,
That ſcarce two Crows could lodge in the ſame Tree.
Strange Things, the Neighbours ſay, have happen'd here:
Wild Shrieks have iſſued from the hollow Tombs,
Dead Men have come again, and walk'd about,
And the Great Bell has toll'd, unrung, untouch'd.
(Such Tales their Chear, at Wake or Goſſiping,
When it draws near to Witching Time of Night.)

Oft, in the lone Church-yard at Night I've ſeen
By Glimpſe of Moon-ſhine, chequering thro' the Trees,
The School-boy with his Satchel in his Hand,
Whiſtling aloud to bear his Courage up,

And

And lightly tripping o'er the long flat Stones
(With Nettles ſkirted, and with Moſs o'ergrown,)
That tell in homely Phraſe who lie below;
Sudden! he ſtarts, and hears, or thinks he hears
The Sound of Something purring at his Heels!
Full faſt he flies, and dares not look behind him,
Till out of Breath he overtakes his Fellows;
Who gather round, and wonder at the Tale
Of horrid *Apparition*, tall and ghaſtly,
That walks at Dead of Night, or takes his Stand
O'er ſome new-open'd *Grave*; and, ſtrange to tell!
Evaniſhes at Crowing of the Cock.

The new-made *Widow* too, I've ſometimes ſpy'd,
Sad Sight! ſlow moving o'er the proſtrate Dead:
Liſtleſs, ſhe crawls along in doleful Black,
Whilſt Burſts of Sorrow guſh from either Eye,
Faſt-falling down her new untaſted Cheek.
Prone on the lowly Grave of the dear Man
She drops; whilſt buſy-meddling Memory,
In barbarous Succeſſion, muſters up
The paſt Endearments of their ſofter Hours,
Tenacious of its Theme. Still, ſtill ſhe thinks
She ſees him, and indulging the fond Thought,
Clings yet more cloſely to the ſenſeleſs Turf,
Nor heeds the Paſſenger who looks that Way.

INVIDIOUS *Grave!* how do'ſt thou rend in ſunder
Whom Love has knit, and Sympathy made one;
A Tie more ſtubborn far than Nature's Band!
Friendſhip! Myſterious Cement of the Soul!
Sweetner of Life! and Solder of Society!
I owe thee much. Thou haſt deſerv'd from me,
Far, far beyond what I can ever pay.
Oft have I prov'd the Labours of thy Love,
And the warm Efforts of the gentle Heart
Anxious to pleaſe. Oh! when my Friend and I
In ſome thick Wood have wander'd heedleſs on,
Hid from the vulgar Eye; and ſat us down
Upon the ſloping Cowſlip-cover'd Bank,
Where the pure limpid Stream has ſlid along
In grateful Errors thro' the Under-wood
Sweet-murmuring: Methought! the ſhrill-tongu'd Thruſh
Mended his Song of Love; the ſooty Blac ד bird
Mellow'd his Pipe, and ſoften'd ev'ry Note:
The Eglantine ſmell'd ſweeter, and the Roſe
Aſſum'd a Dye more deep; whilſt ev'ry Flower
Vy'd with its Fellow-Plant in Luxury
Of Dreſs. Oh! then the longeſt Summer's Day
Seem'd too too much in Haſte: Still the full Heart
Had not imparted half: 'Twas Happineſs
Too exquiſite to laſt. Of Joys departed
Not to return, how painful the Remembrance!

DULL

DULL *Grave!* thou ſpoil'ſt the Dance of youthful Blood,
Strik'ſt out the Dimple from the Cheek of Mirth,
And ev'ry ſmirking Feature from the Face;
Branding our *Laughter* with the Name of *Madneſs*.
Where are the *Jeſters* now? the Men of Health
Complexionally pleaſant? Where the *Droll?*
Whoſe ev'ry Look and Geſture was a Joke
To clapping Theatres and ſhouting Crouds,
And made even thick-lip'd muſing Melancholy
To gather up her Face into a Smile
Before ſhe was aware? Ah! Sullen now,
And dumb, as the green Turf that covers them!

WHERE are the mighty Thunderbolts of War?
The *Roman Cæſars*, and the *Græcian Chiefs*,
The Boaſt of Story? Where the hot-brain'd Youth?
Who the *Tiara* at his Pleaſure tore
From Kings of all the then diſcover'd Globe;
And cry'd forſooth, becauſe his Arm was hamper'd,
And had not Room enough to do its Work?
Alas! how ſlim, diſhonourably ſlim!
And cramm'd into a Space we bluſh to name.
Proud *Royalty!* how alter'd in thy Looks?
How blank thy Features, and how wan thy Hue?
Son of the Morning! whether art thou gone?
Where haſt thou hid thy many-ſpangled Head,

And

And the majeſtick Menace of thine Eyes
Felt from afar! Pliant and powerleſs now,
Like new-born Infant wound up in his Swathes,
Or Victim tumbled flat upon its Back,
That throbs beneath the Sacrificer's Knife:
Mute, muſt thou bear the Strife of little Tongues,
And coward Inſults of the baſe-born Crowd;
That grudge a Privilege, thou never hadſt,
But only hop'd for in the peaceful *Grave*,
Of being unmoleſted and alone.
Arabia's Gums and oderiferous Drugs,
And Honours by the *Heralds* duly paid
In Mode and Form, e'en to a very Scruple;
Oh cruel *Irony!* Theſe come too late;
And only mock, whom they were meant to honour.
Surely! There's not a Dungeon-Slave, that's bury'd
In the High-way, unſhrouded and uncoffin'd,
But lies as ſoft, and ſleeps as ſound as he.
Sorry Pre-eminence of high Deſcent
Above the vulgar-born, to rot in State!

But ſee! the well-plum'd *Herſe* comes nodding on
Stately and ſlow; and properly attended
By the whole Sable Tribe, that painful watch
The ſick Man's Door, and live upon the Dead,
By letting out their Perſons by the Hour

To mimick Sorrow, when the Heart's not ſad.
How rich the Trappings, now they're all unfurl'd,
And glittering in the Sun! Triumphant Entries
Of Conquerors, and Coronation Pomps,
In Glory ſcarce exceed. Great Gluts of People
Retard th' unweildy Show; whilſt from the Caſements
And Houſes Tops, Ranks behind Ranks cloſe-wedg'd
Hang bellying o'er. But! tell us, Why this Waſte?
Why this ado in Earthing up a Carcaſe
That's fall'n into Diſgrace, and in the Noſtril
Smells horrible! Ye *Undertakers!* tell us,
'Midſt all the gorgeous Figures you exhibit,
Why is the Principal conceal'd, for which
You make this mighty Stir? 'Tis wiſely done:
What would offend the Eye in a good Picture
The Painter caſts diſcreetly into Shades.

Proud *Lineage!* now how little thou appear'ſt!
Below the Envy of the Private Man!
Honour! that meddleſome officious Ill,
Purſues thee ev'n to Death; nor there ſtops ſhort.
Strange Perſecution! when the *Grave* itſelf
Is no Protection from rude Sufferance.

Absurd! to think to over-reach the *Grave*,
And from the Wreck of Names to reſcue ours!
The beſt concerted Schemes Men lay for Fame

Die

Die faſt away: Only themſelves die faſter.
The far-fam'd *Sculptor*, and the lawrell'd *Bard*,
Thoſe bold Inſurancers of Deathleſs Fame,
Supply their little feeble Aids in vain.
The tapering *Pyramid!* th' *Egyptian*'s Pride,
And Wonder of the World! whoſe ſpiky Top
Has wounded the thick Cloud, and long out-liv'd
The angry Shaking of the Winter's Storm;
Yet ſpent at laſt by th' Injuries of Heaven,
Shatter'd with Age, and furrow'd o'er with Years,
The Myſtick Cone with Hieroglyphicks cruſted
Gives Way. Oh! lamentable Sight! at once
The Labour of whole Ages lumbers down;
A hideous and miſhapen Length of Ruins.
Sepulchral Columns wreſtle but in vain
With all-ſubduing Time: Her cank'ring Hand
With calm deliberate Malice waſteth them:
Worn on the Edge of Days, the Braſs conſumes,
The Buſto moulders, and the deep-cut Marble,
Unſteady to the Steel, gives up its Charge.
Ambition! half convicted of her Folly,
Hangs down the Head, and reddens at the Tale.

HERE! all the mighty *Troublers of the Earth*,
Who ſwarm to Sov'reign Rule thro' Seas of Blood;
Th' oppreſſive, ſturdy, Man-deſtroying Villains!

Who ravag'd Kingdoms, and laid Empires Waſte,
And in a cruel Wantonneſs of Power
Thinn'd States of half their People, and gave up
To want the reſt: Now like a Storm that's ſpent,
Lye huſh'd, and meanly ſneak behind thy Covert.
Vain Thought! to hide them from the general Scorn,
That haunts and doggs them like an injur'd Ghoſt
Implacable. Here too the *petty Tyrant*
Of ſcant Domains *Geographer* ne'er notic'd,
And well for neighbouring Grounds, of Arm as ſhort;
Who fix'd his Iron Talons on the Poor,
And grip'd them like ſome Lordly Beaſt of Prey;
Deaf to the forceful Cries of gnawing Hunger,
And piteous plaintive Voice of Miſery:
(As if a *Slave* was not a Shred of Nature,
Of the ſame common Nature with his *Lord*:)
Now! tame and humble, like a Child that's whipp'd,
Shakes Hands with Duſt, and calls the Worm his Kinſman;
Nor pleads his Rank and Birthright. Under Ground
Precedency's a Jeſt; Vaſſal and Lord
Groſsly familiar, Side by Side conſume.

When Self-Eſteem, or others Adulation,
Would cunningly perſuade us we were Something
Above the common Level of our Kind;
The *Grave* gainſays the ſmooth-complexion'd Flatt'ry,
And with blunt Truth acquaints us what we are.

BEAUTY!

BEAUTY! thou pretty Play-thing! dear Deceit!
That ſteals ſo ſoftly o'er the Stripling's Heart,
And gives it a new Pulſe, unknown before!
The *Grave* diſcredits thee: Thy Charms expung'd,
Thy Roſes faded, and thy Lillies ſoil'd,
What haſt thou more to boaſt of: Will thy Lovers
Flock round thee now, to gaze and do thee Homage?
Methinks! I ſee thee with thy Head low laid,
Whilſt ſurfeited upon thy Damaſk Cheek
The high-fed *Worm* in lazy Volumes roll'd
Riots unſcar'd. For this, was all thy Caution?
For this, thy painful Labours at thy Glaſs?
T' improve thoſe Charms, and keep them in Repair,
For which the Spoiler thanks thee not. Foul-feeder!
Coarſe Fare and Carrion pleaſe thee full as well,
And leave as keen a Reliſh on the Senſe.
Look! how the Fair One weeps! the conſcious Tears
Stand thick as Dew-drops on the Bells of Flow'rs:
Honeſt Effuſion! the ſwoln Heart in vain
Works hard to put a Gloſs on its Diſtreſs.

STRENGTH too! thou ſurly, and leſs gentle Boaſt
Of thoſe that laugh loud at the Village ring!
A Fit of common Sickneſs pulls thee down
With greater Eaſe, than e'er thou didſt the Stripling
That raſhly dar'd thee to th' unequal Fight.

What

What Groan was that I heard? Deep Groan indeed!
With Anguiſh heavy-laden! Let me trace it:
From yonder Bed it comes where the Strong Man,
By ſtronger Arm belabour'd, gaſps for Breath
Like a hard-haunted Beaſt. How his great Heart
Beats thick! his roomy Cheſt by far too ſcant
To give the Lungs full Play! What now avail
The ſtrong-built ſinewLimbs,and well-ſpreadShoulders?
See! how he tugs for Life, and lays about him,
Mad with his Pain! Eager he catches hold
Of what comes next to Hand, and graſps it hard,
Juſt like a Creature drowning! Hideous Sight!
Oh! how his Eyes ſtand out, and ſtare full ghaſtly!
Whilſt the Diſtemper's rank and deadly Venom
Shoots like a burning Arrow croſs his Bowels,
And drinks his Marrow up. Heard you that Groan?
It was his laſt. See how the great *Goliah*,
Juſt like a Child that brawl'd itſelf to Reſt,
Lies ſtill. What mean'ſt thou then, O mighty Boaſter!
To vaunt of Nerves of thine? What means the Bull,
Unconſcious of his Strength, to play the Coward,
And flee before a feeble Thing like Man;
That kowing well the Slackneſs of his Arm,
Truſts only in the well-invented Knife?

WITH *Study* pale, and Midnight Vigils ſpent,
The Star-ſurveying *Sage*, cloſe to his Eye
Applies the Sight-invigorating Tube;
And travelling through the boundleſs Length of Space
Marks well the Courſes of the far-ſeen Orbs,
That roll with regular Confuſion there,
In Extaſy of Thought. But ah! proud Man!
Great Heights are hazardous to the weak Head:
Soon, very ſoon, thy firmeſt Footing fails;
And down thou dropp'ſt into that darkſome Place,
Where *nor Device*, *nor Knowledge* ever came.

HERE! the *Tongue-Warrior* lies, diſabled now,
Diſarm'd, diſhonour'd, like a Wretch that's gagg'd,
And cannot tell his Ail to Paſſers by.
Great Man of Language! whence this mighty Change?
This dumb Deſpair, and drooping of the Head?
Tho' ſtrong Perſuaſion hung upon thy Lip,
And ſly Inſinuations ſofter Arts
In Ambuſh lay about thy flowing Tongue;
Alas! how Chop-fall'n now! Thick Miſts and Silence
Reſt, like a weary Cloud, upon thy Breaſt
Unceaſing. Ah! Where is the lifted Arm,
The Strength of Action, and the Force of Words,
The well-turn'd Period, and the well-tun'd Voice.
With all the leſſer Ornaments of Phraſe?

Ah!

Ah! fled for ever, as they ne'er had been!
Raz'd from the Book of Fame: Or more provoking,
Perchance ſome Hackney hunger-bitten Scribler
Inſults thy Memory, and blots thy Tomb
With long flat Narrative, or duller Rhimes
With heavy-halting Pace that drawl along;
Enough to rouſe a Dead Man into Rage,
And warm with red Reſentment the wan Cheek.

HERE! the great Maſters of the *healing Art*,
Theſe mighty Mock-Defrauders of the *Tomb!*
Spite of their *Juleps* and *Catholicons*
Reſign to Fate. Proud *Æſculapius'* Son!
Where are thy boaſted Implements of Art,
And all thy well-cram'd Magazines of Health?
Nor Hill, nor Vale, as far as Ship could go,
Nor Margin of the Gravel-bottom'd Brook,
Eſcap'd thy rifling Hand: From ſtubborn Shrubs
Thou wrung'ſt their ſhy retiring Virtues out,
And vex'd them in the Fire: Nor Fly, nor Inſect,
Nor writhy Snake, eſcap'd thy deep Reſearch.
But why this *Apparatus?* Why this Coſt?
Tell us, thou doughty Keeper from the *Grave!*
Where are thy *Recipe's* and *Cordials* now,
With the long Liſt of Vouchers for thy Cures?
Alas! thou ſpeakeſt not. The bold Impoſtor
Looks not more ſilly when the Cheat's found out.

HERE!

HERE! the lank-ſided *Miſer*, worſt of Felons!
Who meanly ſtole, diſcreditable Shift!
From Back and Belly too, their proper Cheer;
Eas'd of a Tax, it irk'd the Wretch to pay
To his own Carcaſe, now lies cheaply lodg'd,
By clamrous Appetites no longer teaz'd,
Nor tedious Bills of Charges and Repairs.
But Ah! Where are his Rents, his Comings in?
Ay! now you've made the Rich Man Poor indeed:
Robb'd of his Gods, what has he left behind!
Oh! Curſed Luſt of Gold! when for thy Sake
The Fool throws up his Int'reſt in both Worlds,
Firſt ſtarv'd in this, then damn'd in that to come.

How ſhocking muſt thy Summons be, O *Death!*
To him that is at Eaſe in his Poſſeſſions;
Who counting on long Years of Pleaſure here,
Is quite unfurniſh'd for that World to come!
In that dread Moment, how the frantick Soul
Raves round the Walls of her Clay Tenement,
Runs to each Avenue, and ſhrieks for Help,
But ſhrieks in vain! How wiſhfully ſhe looks
On all ſhe's leaving, now no longer hers!
A little longer, yet a little longer,
Oh! might ſhe ſtay, to waſh away her Stains,
And fit her for her Paſſage! Mournful Sight!
Her very Eyes weep Blood; and every Groan

She heaves is big with Horror: But the Foe,
Like a ſtanch Murth'rer ſteady to his Purpoſe,
Purſues her cloſe through ev'ry Lane of Life,
Nor miſſes once the Track, but preſſes on;
Till forc'd at laſt to the tremendous Verge,
At once ſhe ſinks to everlaſting Ruin.

Sure! 'tis a ſerious Thing *to Die!* My Soul!
What a ſtrange Moment muſt it be, when near
Thy Journey's End, thou haſt the Gulph in View!
That awful Gulph, no Mortal e'er repaſs'd
To tell what's doing on the other Side!
Nature runs back, and ſhudders at the Sight,
And every Life-ſtring bleeds at Thoughts of parting!
For part they muſt: *Body* and *Soul* muſt part;
Fond Couple! link'd more cloſe than wedded Pair.
This Wings its Way to its Almighty Source,
The Witneſs of its Actions, now its Judge:
That drops into the dark and noiſome *Grave*,
Like a diſabled Pitcher of no Uſe.

If *Death* was nothing, and nought, *after Death*;
If when Men dy'd, at once they ceas'd to Be,
Returning to the barren Womb of Nothing
Whence firſt they ſprung; then might the Debauchee
Untrembling mouth the Heav'ns: Then might the
Drunkard
Reel

Reel over his full Bowl, and when 'tis drain'd,
Fill up another to the Brim, and laugh
At the poor Bug-bear *Death*: Then might the Wretch
That's weary of the World, and tir'd of Life,
At once give each Inquietude the Slip
By ſtealing out of Being, when he pleas'd,
And by what Way; whether by Hemp, or Steel:
Death's thouſand Doors ſtand open. Who could force
The ill-pleas'd Gueſt to ſit out his full Time,
Or blame him if he goes? Sure! he does well
That helps himſelf as timely as he can,
When able. But if there is an *Hereafter*,
And that there is, Conſcience, uninfluenc'd
And ſuffer'd to ſpeak out, tells ev'ry Man;
Then muſt it be an awful Thing *to die*:
More horrid yet to die by one's own Hand.
Self-Murther! name it not: Our Iſland's Shame!
That makes her the Reproach of neighbouring States.
Shall Nature, ſwerving from her earlieſt Dictate
Self-Preſervation, fall by her own Act?
Forbid it Heav'n! Let not upon Diſguſt
The ſhameleſs Hand be foully crimſon'd o'er
With Blood of its own Lord. Dreadful Attempt!
Juſt reeking from Self-ſlaughter, in a Rage
To ruſh into the Preſence of our Judge!
As if we challeng'd him to do his worſt,

And matter'd not his Wrath. Unheard of Tortures
Muſt be reſerv'd for ſuch : Theſe herd together ;
The Common Damn'd ſhun their Society,
And look upon themſelves as Friends leſs foul.
Our Time is fix'd ; and all our Days are number'd ;
How long, how ſhort, we know not : This we know,
Duty requires we calmly wait the Summons,
Nor dare to ſtir till Heav'n ſhall give Permiſſion :
Like Centrys that muſt keep their deſtin'd Stand,
And wait th' appointed Hour, till they're reliev'd.
Thoſe only are the Brave, that keep their Ground,
And keep it to the laſt. To run away
Is but a Coward's Trick : To run away
From this World's Ills, that at the very worſt
Will ſoon blow o'er, thinking to mend ourſelves
By boldly vent'ring on a World unknown,
And plunging headlong in the dark ; 'tis Mad :
No Frenzy half ſo deſperate as this.

Tell us ! ye Dead ! Will none of you in Pity
To thoſe you left behind diſcloſe the Secret ?
Oh ! that ſome courteous Ghoſt would blab it out !
What 'tis You are, and We muſt ſhortly be.
I've heard that Souls departed have ſometimes
Forewarn'd Men of their Death : 'Twas kindly done
To knock, and give th' Alarm. But what means

This

This ſtinted Charity ? 'tis but lame Kindneſs
That does its Work by Halves. Why might you not
Tell us what 'tis *to Dye ?* Do the ſtrict Laws
Of your Society forbid your ſpeaking
Upon a Point ſo nice ? I'll aſk no more ;
Sullen, like Lamps in Sepulchres, your Shine
Enlightens but yourſelves : Well,--- 'tis no Matter ;
A very little Time will clear up all,
And make us learn'd as you are, and as cloſe.

DEATH's Shafts fly thick ! Here falls the Village Swain,
And there his pamper'd Lord ! The Cup goes round ;
And who ſo artful as to put it by ?
'Tis long ſince *Death* had the Majority ;
Yet ſtrange ! *the Living lay it not to Heart.*
See ! yonder Maker of the Dead Man's Bed,
The *Sexton !* hoary-headed Chronicle,
Of hard unmeaning Face, down which ne'er ſtole
A gentle Tear ; with Mattock in his Hand
Digs through whole Rows of Kindred and Acquaintance
By far his Juniors ! Scarce a Scull's caſt up,
But well he knew its Owner, and can tell
Some Paſſage of his Life. Thus Hand in Hand
The Sot has walk'd with *Death* twice Twenty Years ;
And yet ne'er Yonker on the Green laughs louder,
Or clubs a Smuttier Tale : When Drunkards meet
None ſings a merrier Catch, or lends a Hand,

More

More willing to his Cup. Poor Wretch! he minds not,
That ſoon ſome truſty Brother of the Trade
Shall do for him what he has done for Thouſands.

On this Side, and on that, Men ſee their Friends
Drop off, like Leaves in Autumn; yet launch out
Into fantaſtick Schemes, which the long Livers,
In the World's hale and undegenerate Days,
Could ſcarce have Leiſure for! Fools that we are!
Never to think of *Death*, and of *Ourſelves*
At the ſame Time! As if to learn *to Die*
Were no Concern of ours. Oh! more than Sottiſh!
For Creatures of a Day, in gameſome Mood
To frolick on Eternity's dread Brink,
Unapprehenſive; when for ought we know
The very firſt ſwoln Surge ſhall ſweep us in.
Think we, or think we not, *Time* hurries on
With a reſiſtleſs unremitting Stream,
Yet treads more ſoft than e'er did Midnight Thief,
That ſlides his Hand under the Miſer's Pillow,
And carries off his Prize. What is *this World?*
What? but a ſpacious *Burial-Field* unwall'd,
Strew'd with Death's Spoils, the Spoils of Animals
Savage and Tame, and full of Dead Mens Bones?
The very Turf on which we tread, once liv'd;
And we that live muſt lend our Carcaſes

To

To cover our own Offspring: In their Turns
They too muſt cover theirs. 'Tis *here* all meet!
The ſhiv'ring *Icelander*, and Sun-burnt *Moor*;
Men of all Climes, that never met before;
And of all Creeds, the *Jew*, the *Turk*, and *Chriſtian*.
Here the proud *Prince*, and *Favourite* yet prouder,
His Sov'reign's Keeper, and the People's Scourge,
Are huddled out of Sight. *Here* lie abaſh'd
The great *Negociaters* of the Earth,
And celebrated *Maſters* of the *Ballance*,
Deep read in Stratagems, and Wiles of Courts:
Now vain their *Treaty-Skill!* Death ſcorns to treat.
Here the o'erloaded *Slave* flings down his Burthen
From his gall'd Shoulders; and when the cruel Tyrant
With all his Guards and Tools of Pow'r about him,
Is meditating new unheard-of Hardſhips,
Mocks his ſhort Arm, and quick as Thought eſcapes
Where Tyrants vex not, and the Weary reſt.
Here the warm *Lover* leaving the cool Shade,
The Tell-tale Echo, and the babbling Stream,
Time out of Mind the favo'rite Seats of Love,
Faſt by his gentle Miſtreſs lay him down
Unblaſted by foul Tongue. *Here* Friends and Foes
Lie cloſe; unmindful of their former Feuds.
The Lawn-rob'd *Prelate*, and plain *Preſbyter*,
E'er while that ſtood aloof, as ſhy to meet,

Familiar

Familiar mingle *here*, like Sifter-Streams
That ſome rude interpoſing Rock had ſplit.
Here is the large-limb'd *Peaſant* : *Here* the *Child*
Of a Span long, that never ſaw the Sun,
Nor preſs'd the Nipple, ſtrangled in Life's Porch.
Here is the *Mother* with her Sons and Daughters ;
The barren *Wife* ; and long demurring *Maid*,
Whoſe lonely unappropriated Sweets
Smil'd like yon Knot of Cowſlips on the Cliff,
Not to be come at by the willing Hand.
Here are the *Prude* ſevere, and gay *Coquet*,
The ſober *Widow*, and the young green *Virgin*,
Cropp'd like a Roſe, before 'tis fully blown,
Or half its Worth diſclos'd. Strange Medley *here* !
Here garrulous *Old Age* winds up his Tale ;
And jovial *Youth* of lightſome vacant Heart,
Whoſe ev'ry Day was made of Melody,
Hears not the Voice of Mirth : The ſhrill-tongu'd Shrew,
Meek as the Turtle-Dove, forgets her Chiding.
Here the Wiſe, the Generous, and the Brave ;
The Juſt, the Good, the Worthleſs, the Prophane,
The downright Clown, and perfectly Well-bred ;
The Fool, the Churl, the Soundrel, and the Mean,
The ſupple Stateſman, and the Patriot ſtern ;
The Wrecks of Nations, and the Spoils of Time,
With all the Lumber of Six Thouſand Years.

Poor *Man!* how Happy once in thy *first State!*
When yet but warm from thy great Maker's Hand,
He ſtamp'd thee with his Image, and well-pleas'd,
Smil'd on his laſt fair Work. Then all was Well.
Sound was the *Body*, and the *Soul* ſerene;
Like Two ſweet Inſtruments ne'er out of Tune,
That Play their ſeveral Parts. Nor Head, nor Heart,
Offer'd to ache: Nor was there Cauſe they ſhould;
For all was pure within: No fell Remorſe,
Nor anxious Caſtings up of what might be,
Alarm'd his peaceful Boſom: Summer Seas
Shew not more ſmooth, when kiſs'd by Southern Winds
Juſt ready to expire. Scarce importun'd
The generous Soil with a luxuriant Hand
Offer'd the various Produce of the Year,
And every Thing moſt perfect in its Kind.
Bleſſed! thrice bleſſed Days! But Ah, how ſhort!
Bleſs'd as the pleaſing Dreams of Holy Men;
But fugitive like thoſe, and quickly gone.
Oh! flipp'ry State of Things! What ſudden Turns?
What ſtrange Viciſſitudes, in the firſt Leaf
Of Man's ſad Hiſtory? To-day moſt Happy,
And 'ere To-morrow's Sun has ſet, moſt Abject!
How ſcant the Space between theſe vaſt Extremes!
Thus far'd it with *our Sire:* Not long he' enjoy'd
His Paradiſe! Scarce had the happy Tenant

Of the fair Spot due Time to prove its Sweets,
Or ſum them up; when ſtrait he muſt be gone
Ne'er to return again. And muſt he go?
Can nought compound for the firſt dire Offence
Of erring Man? Like one that is condemn'd
Fain would he trifle Time with idle Talk,
And parley with his Fate. But 'tis in vain.
Not all the laviſh Odours of the Place
Offer'd in Incenſe can procure his Pardon,
Or mitigate his Doom. A mighty Angel
With flaming Sword forbids his longer Stay,
And drives the Loiterer forth; nor muſt he take
One laſt and farewel Round. At once he loſt
His Glory, and his God. If Mortal now,
And ſorely maim'd, no Wonder! *Man has Sinn'd.*
Sick of his Bliſs, and bent on new Adventures,
Evil he wou'd needs try: Nor try'd in vain.
(Dreadful Experiment! Deſtructive Meaſure!
Where the worſt Thing could happen, is Succeſs.)
Alas! too well he ſped: The *Good* he ſcorn'd
Stalk'd of reluctant, like an ill-us'd Ghoſt,
Not to return; or if it did, its Viſits
Like thoſe of *Angles* ſhort, and far between:
Whilſt the black *Dæmon* with his Hell-'ſcap'd Train,
Admitted once into its better Room,
Grew loud and mutinous, nor would be gone;

Lording

Lording it o'er the *Man*, who now too late
Saw the raſh Error, which he could not mend:
An Error fatal not to him alone,
But to his future Sons, his Fortune's Heirs.
Inglorious Bondage! Human Nature groans
Beneath a Vaſſalage ſo vile and cruel,
And its vaſt Body bleeds through ev'ry Vein.

WHAT Havock haſt thou made? Foul Monſter *Sin!*
Greateſt and firſt of Ills! The fruitful Parent
Of Woes of all Dimenſions! But for *thee*
Sorrow had never been. All noxious Thing!
Of vileſt Nature! Other Sorts of Evils
Are kindly circumſcrib'd and have their Bounds.
The fierce *Volcano*, from its burning Entrails
That belches molten Stone and Globes of Fire,
Involv'd in pitchy Clouds of Smoke and Stench,
Marrs the adjacent Fields for ſome Leagues round,
And there it ſtops. The big-ſwoln *Inundation*,
Of Miſchief more diffuſive, raving loud,
Buries whole Tracts of Country, threat'ning more;
But that too has its Shore it cannot paſs.
More dreadful far than theſe! *Sin* has laid waſte
Not here and there a Country, but *a World:*
Diſpatching at a wide extended Blow
Entire Mankind; and for their Sakes defacing
A whole Creation's Beauty with rude Hands;

Blasting the foodful Grain, the loaded Branches,
And marking all along its Way with Ruin.
Accursed Thing! Oh, where shall Fancy find
A proper Name to call thee by, expressive
Of all thy Horrors? Pregnant Womb of Ills!
Of temper so transcendently malign,
That Toads and Serpents of most deadly Kind
Compar'd to thee are harmless. Sicknesses
Of ev'ry Size and Symptom, racking Pains,
And bluest Plagues, are thine! See! how the Fiend
Profusely scatters the Contagion round!
Whilst deep-mouth'd Slaughter bellowing at her Heels
Wades deep in Blood new-spilt; yet for To-morrow
Shapes out new Work of great uncommon Daring,
And inly pines till the dread Blow is struck.

But hold! I've gone too far; too much discover'd
My Father's Nakedness, and Nature's Shame.
Here let me pause! and drop an honest Tear,
One Burst of filial Duty, and Condolance,
O'er all those ample Desarts *Death* has spread,
This *Chaos* of Mankind. O Great *Man-Eater!*
Whose ev'ry Day is *Carnival*, not sated yet!
Unheard of *Epicure!* without a Fellow!
The veryest *Gluttons* do not always cram;
Some Intervals of Abstinence are sought
To Edge the Appetite: *Thou* seekest none.

Methinks!

Methinks! the countleſs Swarms thou haſt devour'd,
And Thouſands that each Hour thou globbeſt up;
This, leſs than *this*, might gorge the to the full!
But Ah! rapacious ſtill, thou gap'ſt for more:
Like One, whole Days defrauded of his Meals,
On whom lank Hunger lays her ſkinny Hand,
And whets to keeneſt Eagerneſs his Cravings.
(As if Diſeaſes, Maſſacres, and Poiſon,
Famine, and War, were not thy Caterers!)

But know! that Thou muſt *render up thy Dead*,
And with high Int'reſt too! They are not thine;
But only in thy Keeping for a Seaſon,
Till the Great promis'd Day of Reſtitution;
When loud diffuſive Sound from brazen Trump
Of Strong-lung'd Cherub ſhall alarm thy Captives,
And rouſe the long, long Sleepers into Life,
Day-Light, and Liberty.----------
Then muſt thy Gates fly open, and reveal
The Mines, that lay long forming under Ground,
In their dark Cells immur'd; but now full ripe,
And pure as Silver from the Crucible,
That twice has ſtood the Torture of the Fire
And Inquiſion of the Forge. We know,
Th' illuſtrious Deliverer of Mankind,
The Son of God, thee foil'd. Him in thy pow'r

Thou

Thou couldſt not hold: Self-vigorous he roſe,
And, ſhaking off thy Fetters, ſoon retook
Thoſe Spoils, his voluntary Yielding lent.
(Sure Pledge of our Releaſment from thy Thrall!)
Twice Twenty Days he ſojourn'd here on Earth,
And ſhew'd himſelf alive to *choſen Witneſſes*
By Proofs ſo ſtrong, that the moſt ſlow-aſſenting
Had not a Scruple left. This having done,
He mounted up to Heav'n. Methinks! I ſee him
Climb the Ærial Heights, and glide along
Athwart the ſevering Clouds: But the faint Eye
Flung backwards in the Chace, ſoon drops its Hold;
Diſabled quite, and jaded with purſuing.
Heaven's Portals wide expand to let him in:
Nor are his Friends ſhut out: As ſome great Prince
Not for himſelf alone procures Admiſſion,
But for his Train: It was his Royal Will,
That where He is, there ſhould his Followers be.
Death only lies between! A gloomy Path!
Made yet more gloomy by our Coward Fears!
But nor untrod, nor tedious: The Fatigue
Will ſoon go off. Beſides, there's no By-road
To Bliſs. Then why, like ill-condition'd Children,
Start we at tranſient Hardſhips, in the Way
That leads to purer Air, and ſofter Skies,
And a ne'er Setting Sun? Fools that we are?

We

We wiſh to be, where Sweets unwith'ring Bloom;
But ſtrait our Wiſh revoke, and will not go.
So have I ſeen upon a Summer's Even,
Faſt by the Riv'let's Brink, a Youngſter play:
How wiſhfully he looks! To ſtem the Tide
This Moment reſolute, next unreſolv'd:
At laſt! he dips his Foot; but as he dips,
His Fears redouble, and he runs away
From the inoffenſive Stream, unmindful now
Of all the Flow'rs, that paint the further Bank,
And ſmil'd ſo ſweet of late. Thrice welcome *Death*!
That after many a painful bleeding Step
Conducts us to our Home, and lands us ſafe
On the long-wiſh'd for Shore. Prodigious Change!
Our Bane turn'd to a Bleſſing! *Death* diſarm'd
Loſes her Fulneſs quite: All Thanks to him
Who ſcourg'd the Venom out. Sure! *the laſt End*
Of the Good Man is *Peace*. How calm his *Exit*!
Night-Dews fall not more gently to the Ground,
Nor weary worn out Winds expire ſo ſoft.
Behold him! in the Evening-Tide of Life,
A Life well-ſpent, whoſe early Care it was
His riper Years ſhould not upbraid his Green:
By unperceiv'd Degrees he wears away;
Yet like the Sun ſeems larger at his Setting!
High in his Faith and Hopes, look! how he reaches
After the Prize in View! and, like a Bird

That's

That's hamper'd ſtruggles hard to get away!
Whilſt the glad Gates of Sight are wide expanded
To let new Glories in, the firſt fair Fruits
Of the faſt-coming Harveſt. *Then!* Oh *Then!*
Each Earth-born Joy grows vile, or diſappears,
Shrunk to a Thing of Nought. Oh! how he longs
To have his Paſſport ſign'd, and be diſmiſs'd!
'Tis done; and now he's Happy: The glad *Soul*
Has not a Wiſh uncrown'd. Ev'n the lag *Fleſh*
Reſts too *in Hope* of meeting once again
Its better Half, never to ſunder more.
Nor ſhall it hope in vain: The Time draws on
When not a ſingle Spot of Burial-Earth,
Whether on Land, or in the ſpacious Sea,
But muſt give back its long-committed Duſt
Inviolate: And faithfully ſhall theſe
Make up the full Account; not the leaſt Atom
Embezzl'd, or miſlaid, of the whole Tale.
Each *Soul* ſhall have a *Body* ready furniſh'd;
And each ſhall have his own. Hence ye Prophane!
Aſk not, how this can be? Sure the ſame Pow'r
That rear'd the Piece at firſt, and took it down,
Can re-aſſemble the looſe ſcatter'd Parts,
And put them as they were. Almighty God
Has done much more; nor is his Arm impair'd
Thro' Length of Days: And what he can, he will:
His Faithfulneſs ſtands bound to ſee it done.

When

When the dread Trumpet ſounds, the ſlumb'ring Duſt,
Not unattentive to the Call, ſhall wake:
And every Joint poſſeſs its proper Place,
With a new Elegance of Form, unknown
To its firſt State. Nor ſhall the conſcious *Soul*
Miſtake its Partner; but amidſt the Croud
Singling its other Half, into its Arms
Shall ruſh, with all th' Impatience of a Man
That's new-come Home, who having long been abſent
With Haſte runs over ev'ry different Room,
In Pain to ſee the whole. Thrice happy Meeting!
Nor *Time*, nor *Death* ſhall ever part them more.

'Tis but a Night, a long and moonleſs Night,
We make the *Grave* our Bed, and then are gone.

Thus at the Shut of Ev'n, the weary Bird
Leaves the wide Air, and in ſome lonely Brake
Cow'rs down, and dozes till the Dawn of Day,
Then claps his well-fledg'd Wings, and bears away.

F I N I S.

H. L.

Colinda Austin's Book, 8

H

Hezekiah.

J.